

Santa Barbara City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness and Community Relations

March 30, 2011

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Westside Center
423 W. Victoria Street
Santa Barbara, CA
Minutes

Council Members Present: Helene Schneider, Dale Francisco (Chair), Bendy White

Staff Present: Nancy Rapp, Sgt. James Pflieger, Sue Gray, Deirdre Randolph

Stakeholders Present: Sharon Byrne (Milpas Community Association), Mike Foley (Casa Esperanza), Jennifer Bernstein (Environmental Health), Rolf Geyling (Rescue Mission), Anthony Carroccio (Organic Soup Kitchen), Jennifer Ferraez (St. Brigid's/Doctors w/o Walls), Margaret Connell (City of Goleta), Deborah Schwartz (Planning Commission), Bill Collyer (Downtown Organization), Mark Gisler, (Salvation Army)

1. WELCOME – Helene Schneider

All in attendance introduced themselves.

2. SUB-GROUP REPORT – Sue Gray

Goal: Lessen the perceived impact of Community Kitchen's lunch provision on the Milpas corridor.

Current Status of Meal Provision in South Coast:

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Santa Barbara			
Casa Esperanza		Mon - Sun	
New Friendship Church		Mon - Fri	
Salvation Army	Mon - Sat		Sun
Rescue Mission	Mon - Fri		Mon - Sun
Uffizi Mission Pershing Park			Wed
Uffizi Mission Alameda Park			Thurs
Isla Vista			
St. Mark's Church		Mon - Fri	
St. Brigid Fellowship	Mon-Fri		Monday
St. Raphael Church		Mon - Fri	
Carpinteria			
Torrey Pine on Carpinteria Ave.			n/a

Considerations:

- Need – In order for Casa Esperanza to restrict food distribution to shelter clients only, adequate services must be offered elsewhere for 100+ individuals 7 days per week.
- Locations – Important to be accessible to homeless persons living on the street.
- Neighborhood Impacts-Could create mini problem “corridors”.
- Start Up Funding (\$235,000 - \$330,000 operating + \$35,000 - \$40,000 for vehicle).
- Sustainability (ongoing operating funding).
- Services – Subcommittee has expressed the need for food to be paired with services. With that in mind, it may be counterproductive to spread out food distribution, as Casa Esperanza already provides food and services in one location. Note: Santa Monica just brought food distribution inside in order to link meals with services.
- Measuring Results-Need for data driven evaluation tools to determination that the need is being met.
- Need for restroom access (lessen neighborhood impact).
- Need for trash pick up and disposal (lessen neighborhood impact).
- Use of disposable paper products – not practical to use reusable trays and utensils.
- Increased Expense – Currently, the meals served at Casa Esperanza equal \$2.70 per meal; proposals for off-site food distribution equals \$3.22 - \$3.82 per meal.
- Inclement Weather – not ideal for serving food.

Options:

A new food distribution model could be designed and implemented with adequate funding, both start-up and ongoing operating. However, the group is concerned about the feasibility of obtaining sustainable funding in this economic climate when funding for current programs is being reduced or eliminated.

The group quickly came to the realization that none of the options discussed were problem-free. They struggled with the concept of moving people away from a location that provides easy one-stop access to services, medical care, showers, restrooms and trash receptacles, as well as the increased cost to provide the same services at several different locations. The group also struggled with the potential impact on other neighborhoods by moving 100+ meals now served at Casa Esperanza to other locations, especially without adequate restroom and/or trash facilities.

Therefore, the group is presenting the following options regarding food distribution and the impact on the Milpas corridor:

Long Term:

- Lobby the State Legislature to reinstate the previous definition language for satellite food distribution that exempted non-profits organizations serving prepackaged unit servings of food from having to meet extensive structural and operational requirements, usually at remote sites, to obtain a permit.
 - Cost effective (\$2.19 per meal)
 - Indoors with access to toilets and trash receptacles

Short Term:

- Keep meal provision on-site at Casa Esperanza.
 - Cost effective (\$2.70 per meal)
 - Access to services, showers, restrooms and trash receptacles

- Support Organic Soup Kitchen in setting up off-site meal provision, on a smaller scale, to serve those who are not interested in accessing services at Casa Esperanza.
 - Reduce number of people traveling to Community Kitchen and therefore, reduce the impact on the Milpas corridor.
 - Coordinate locations and times of meals with the services of the Health Care for Homeless mobile bus so those that may be service-resistant begin receiving care.

3. PROPOSAL – FOOD DISTRIBUTION MODEL: MIKE FOLEY, CASA ESPERANZA COMMUNITY KITCHEN

- \$279,260 per year for operating and food costs
- Plus \$35,000 - \$40,000 to purchase truck
- Plus \$50,000 cash reserve (It is the experience of Casa Esperanza and the Community Kitchen that it is unwise to begin any project without a rolling cash reserve of approximately 20%)
- 7 days per week at 4 sites/50 meals at each site.
- The Community Kitchen works to provide a meal consisting of 4 to 5 courses in a balanced approach, including protein, grains/starches, vegetables and fruit. Since this may be the only meal that people will have, the Community Kitchen works to meet an individual's daily caloric and nutritional needs by providing a variety of foods each day.

4. PROPOSAL – FOOD DISTRIBUTION MODEL: ANTHONY CARROCCIO, ORGANIC SOUP KITCHEN

- \$235,000 per year for operating and food costs
- Plus \$35,000 - \$40,000 to purchase truck
- 7 days per week at 4 sites/50 meals at each site
- The meal will meet the requirements for a full day's nutrition. No stimulants or processed foods will be served. All food will be anti inflammatory and low glycemic. People tend to be more grounded when fed a diet high in protein and low in processed fats and absolutely no refined sugar. Food will consist of: 2 organic burritos, 2 apples, protein shake and Quinoa with veggies.

5. ROUNDTABLE & PUBLIC DISCUSSION

- The legislative change mentioned as a long-term option was a bill that changed the Health & Safety Code. It might not be as difficult as it looks at first although it could take as long as two years. It would only affect governments, schools and non-profits. The Council Subcommittee asked that it be added to the City Council's Legislative Platform.
- Regarding Organic Soup Kitchen providing off-site meal provision, on a smaller scale, to serve those who are not interested in accessing services at Casa Esperanza, it would be a "band-aid" now and then it would move inside upon the bill being changed. It would be monitored, be flexible and work with law enforcement and social services and the medical bus.
- Wherever food is delivered, there must be a Good Neighbor Policy in place.

- Bridges are built over a meal. Health costs go down when people are healthy and good nutrition is critical to good health.
- Westmont College serves two meals per week in parks and beach. You can't fill a stomach with sympathy. If one person can personally get 29 people off the street in one year, we should be able to do much more.
- Casa Esperanza provides excellent services for the homeless including Restorative Court.
- Our goal should be to have Santa Monica come to us to see how great our ideas are working.
- Artisan Court and El Carrillo provide supportive housing but not food.
- The Conditional Use Permit issued to Casa Esperanza should be revised.
- Casa Esperanza agreed previously that if 100 homeless were served daily elsewhere then they would agree to reduce the number of meals served on Cacique Street.
- It's not food delivery that is the problem. It's easy access to alcohol and the lack of police presence.
- Santa Monica definitely has more police. Santa Barbara needs more police.
- The goal is to be able to have subsidiary facilities with Good Neighbor Policies. The point is to identify people and get them out of the endless cycle.
- Funding is a major issue.
- Grants now are only pledged for one year at a time. Casa Esperanza has had to cut its budget by 20%.
- Organic Soup Kitchen is less costly, and has less overhead. All money is spent on food. With an endorsement from the City, funding could be secured.
- Where do we get additional funding for food, or truck or police? The Santa Monica funding stream is amazing.
- Santa Monica has a very high business fee. Their sales tax is 10.25% and they allocate a portion of that to their homeless programs. They have a very strong business community.
- Los Angeles County has made a significant commitment as well.
- We must have very clear deliverables and outcomes and come up with local best practices. We seem to be "program rich, coordination poor".
- The focus was on the Milpas corridor which has now been elongated due to expansion to the Baptist Church.
- There is a direct correlation between crime in the area and police in the area. When police resources were there, initially there is an increase in arrests, then arrests go down. Consistent policing must be in place. It is up to City Council to see that that happens.
- The police are still trying to maintain their presence on lower Milpas but it's true that the coverage is not as high as it was during the highest 2-month period.
- Police statistics should better depict the types of crimes.
- Service call data is available.
- Police do an amazing job when they are there. They just have to be there consistently.
- There are price tags associated with all possible solutions. Without City money, it simply won't happen; other resources won't show up. These matters need to be the focus and priority for the upcoming City budget.
- The homeless problem is intractable and daunting. The City takes on a disproportionate amount of the funding needed. Santa Monica has funding and police officers.

- The City budget process is beginning. Perhaps the Committee should go back to the 12-Point Plan to determine which of those have been successfully implemented. If any of the proposals have not been successful, perhaps resources could be transferred to alternative ideas.
- In the Big Picture it is unlikely that General Funds this year could be used for a food program.
- One of the 12-point recommendations was to limit liquor sales – that has not been implemented.
- The City Council’s Legislative Platform was revised to express the City’s support for state legislation to allow cities and counties to designate “Alcohol Impacted Areas” and to impose strict local review and controls on the issuance of new ABC permits within such areas.
- It might be a good idea for a small group of City officials to meet with several local major funders and see if they have interest in providing funding for alternative food distribution/service centers.

Next Steps:

- Invite representative of Common Ground to deliver findings and data gathered during the count conducted in early March
- Council members reach out to other local jurisdiction’s civic leaders. Invite them to provide information and participate.
- Identify the source, amount and where funds are being spent now in connection with 12 point plan recommendations and any other homeless programs.
- Review progress on the implementation of the 12-point plan and reset goals where needed.
- Subcommittee to come up with a set of policy recommendations to take to Council.

6. NEXT MEETING – TBD, approximately one month

7. ADJOURNED AT 5:30 p.m.